



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

February 12, 2008

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES: AUTHORIZATION TO
EXTEND FUNDING FOR THE SERVICES OF THE COURT APPOINTED "KATIE A"
PANEL**

**(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)
(3 VOTES)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Authorize the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to extend funding for the services of the Court appointed "Katie A" Panel from February 12, 2008, or the date of Board approval, whichever comes later, through June 30, 2009.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

In 2002, a class action lawsuit (Katie A) was filed against the State and County alleging that children in contact with the County's foster care system were not receiving the mental health services to which they were entitled. In July 2003, the County entered into a Settlement Agreement resolving the County portion of the lawsuit.

One component of the Settlement Agreement was the establishment of a Court appointed Panel of experts to advise the County on the development of plans to meet the obligations of the Settlement Agreement, to monitor the County's implementation of such plans, and to report to the Court on the County's progress in these efforts. The Panel is established through, and mandated by, the Federal Court overseeing the Settlement Agreement. Funding for the services of the Panel has been approved by your Board through January 2008.

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

Additionally, on August 21, 2007, your Board approved the Countywide Enhanced Specialized Foster Care Mental Health Services Corrective Action Plan (CAP) which represents the County's response to the November 2006 "Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law Order" issued in the Katie A lawsuit. The intent of the CAP included implementation and funding commitments for the completion of Phase I by June 30, 2009. Although we anticipate that oversight by the Federal Court, based upon recommendations by the Panel, will continue at least another two years, we are requesting that the Panel be extended for 18 months to coincide with the anticipated completion of Phase I of the CAP. We will continue to work with DCFS, the Department of Mental Health, County Counsel and the Panel to ensure Phase I is implemented by June 30, 2009 and will report quarterly on the progress. Additionally, we will come back to your Board within the next 12 months with a plan for Phase II of the CAP and at that time, we will also request that the Panel be extended as appropriate.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The recommended Board action is consistent with the County's Programmatic Goal 5, Children and Families Well-Being, within the Countywide Strategic Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Actual costs for the Panel through FY 2006-07 are below \$175,000 per year. DCFS has \$220,000 included in its FY 2007-08 Adopted Budget to fund the Panel costs and will include a similar amount in its FY 2008-09 Budget Request. There is no additional net County cost impact.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

In 2002, a class action lawsuit (Katie A) was filed against the State and County alleging that children in contact with the County's foster care system were not receiving the mental health services to which they were entitled. In July 2003, the County entered into a Settlement Agreement resolving the County portion of the lawsuit. Under the terms of the Settlement Agreement, the County is obligated to make a number of systemic improvements to better serve children with mental health needs. Specifically, the County must ensure that class members:

1. Promptly receive necessary individualized mental health services in their own home, a family setting, or the most homelike setting appropriate to their needs;
2. Receive care and services needed to prevent removal from their families or dependency or, when removal cannot be avoided, to facilitate reunification, and to meet their needs for safety, permanence, and stability;
3. Be afforded stability in their placements, whenever possible; and
4. Receive care and services consistent with good child welfare and mental health practice and the requirements of law.

The Settlement Agreement also established a Court appointed Panel of experts to advise the County on the development of its plans to meet the obligations of the Settlement Agreement, to monitor the County's implementation of such plans, and to report to the Court on the County's progress in these efforts. The Panel has provided DCFS and the Department of Mental Health with valuable assistance in complying with the terms of the Settlement Agreement.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

The Panel's services are an integral part of the Department's Strategic Plan to meet the requirements of the Katie A Settlement Agreement and to achieve the goals of increased safety, improved timelines to permanence, and reduced reliance on out-of-home care for children in the foster care system.

Respectfully submitted,



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

WTF:SRH:MS
GP:BM:ap

c: County Counsel